

CLAIMS

1. A pharmaceutical composition for oral administration comprising a carrier and, as active ingredient, an opioid agonist characterized in that the composition is in the form of a fast-dispersing dosage form comprising a network of said active and a water-soluble or water-dispersible carrier which is inert towards said active, said dosage form disintegrates within 1-60 seconds of being placed in the oral cavity.
2. A composition according to claim 1 in which the opioid agonist is fentanyl or a salt thereof.
3. A composition according to claim 1 wherein said network having been obtained by subliming solvent from a composition in the solid state, that composition comprising said active and a solution of the carrier in a solvent.
4. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 1 in which said active ingredient is present in an amount from 0.2 to 95% by weight of the composition.
5. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 2 in which fentanyl or a salt thereof is present in an amount from 0.5 to 10% by weight of the composition.
6. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 2 in which the active ingredient is present in an amount from 0.1 to 200 mg per dosage form.

7. A method of providing anesthetic pre-medication, said method comprising the step of providing to a patient in need thereof the pharmaceutical composition according to claim 1.

8. A method of inducing anesthesia, said method comprising the step of administering a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 1 to a patient in need thereof.

9. A method of administering an opioid agonist to a patient which comprises introducing into the oral cavity of the patient a composition according to claim 1.

10. A method of treating pain which comprises introducing into the oral cavity of a patient a therapeutically effective amount of a composition according to claim 1.

11. The method according to claim 10 in which the pain is chronic pain.

12. The method according to claim 10 in which the patient is experiencing chronic pain and the pain to be treated is breakthrough pain.